

# Teaching Literacy in Tennessee Professional Learning Package: Participant Learning Guide

Learning Session #1

#### **Session Summary**

This first learning session explores key ideas about *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*. It is designed to build teachers' understanding of what effective literacy teaching looks like at a high level. It introduces educators to the research base, theory of action, and key terms of *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.

### **Objectives**

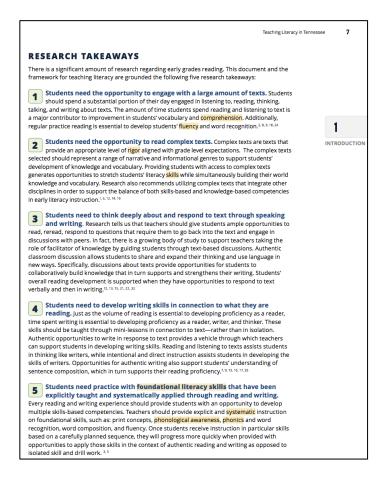
- Read and discuss key excerpts from Teaching Literacy in Tennessee
- Define "skills-based competencies" and "knowledge-based competencies" and understand how they work together
- Review the theory of action and apply it to a classroom context



#### Teaching Literacy in Tennessee

In the May of 2017, the Tennessee Department of Education published a document called *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*. This guide was designed to support educators in improving literacy instruction by providing concrete information, examples, and recommendations. *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* is grounded in a set of research takeaways, which are found on **page 7**. Read the research takeaways and discuss the following question:

• Imagine a teacher who has read this research and applied it to their classroom. What would their literacy instruction look like? Use the space below to draw or write a description.

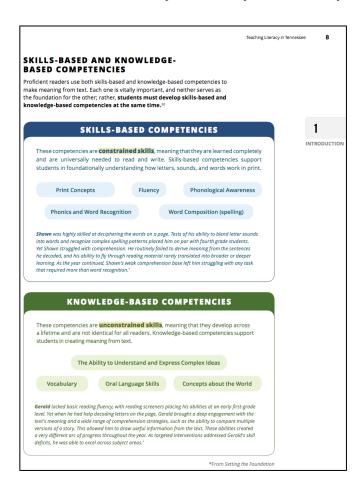




#### **Skills-based and Knowledge-based Competencies**

*Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* recognizes that students must develop both knowledge and skills to become strong readers. Review the information on skills-based and knowledge-based competencies found on **page 8**. After reading, complete the following activity with a partner:

 How would you define skills-based and knowledge-based competencies? Using the space below, write a summary, or draw a picture that explains the meaning of these terms.



Share your summaries and drawings. Then, work together as a group to create one common summary or picture that incorporates your different understandings. Close this section by discussing the following question:

How do skills-based and knowledge-based competencies work together in literacy development?
Think about Shawn and Gerald (the two students described on page 8) and any students you have worked with whose stories illustrate the importance of both knowledge and skills.



#### **Tennessee's Theory of Action**

Tennessee has set an ambitious goal of having at least 75 percent of third graders reading on grade level by 2025. To achieve this goal, we have anchored our work in a strong theory of action. Our theory of action, shown on **page 10** and copied below, outlines an instructional approach that reflects the five research takeaways and the connection between skills- and knowledge-based competencies. Read the theory of action. As you read, underline key words or phrases that stand out to you.

**The framework** for *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* is predicated on a **theory of action that is grounded in research**:

If we provide daily opportunities for all students to build skills-based and knowledge-based competencies by...

- · engaging in a high volume of reading;
- · reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level;
- · thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing;
- · developing the skill and craft of a writer; and
- practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing;

then, we will meet or exceed our goal of having 75 percent of third graders reading on grade level by 2025.



## Tennessee's Theory of Action in Practice: Mr. Hermann's Classroom

*Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* provides a rich narrative example of what our theory of action looks like in practice. Reread the story of Mr. Hermann's first grade class (**pages 14-34**), and complete the following graphic organizer. Look for specific pieces of evidence from Mr. Hermann's class that show how he is applying the theory of action to his classroom.

Theory of Action	Evidence of Application in Mr. Hermann's Class
Students engage in a high volume of reading	
Students read and listen to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level	
Students think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing	
Students develop the skill and craft of a writer	
Students practice foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing	



#### Mr. Hermann's Classroom: Discussion

After reading and reflecting on Mr. Hermann's classroom, discuss the questions below.

- How does Mr. Hermann integrate the theory of action throughout his instruction?
- How does Mr. Hermann develop students' skills-based and knowledge-based competencies?
- What else stood out to you as you read about Mr. Hermann's classroom?



## **Tennessee's Theory of Action: Reflect**

Think about your own instruction and the extent to which the theory of action lives in your classroom. Where do you see the theory of action reflected in your current approach to literacy instruction? Are there parts of the theory of action that you'd like to think more about and apply more deeply to your classroom? Use the following graphic organizer to guide your reflection. Then, discuss your thoughts with a partner or small group.

Theory of Action	Evidence of Application from My Own Classroom OR Ideas for How l Can Grow in this Area
Students engage in a high volume of reading	
Students read and listen to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level	
Students think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing	
Students develop the skill and craft of a writer	
Students practice foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing	



#### **Preparing for the Next Learning Session**

Teaching Literacy in Tennessee provides a companion document with additional information for supporting English learners. The differentiation strategies shared in this companion document are a helpful resource for all teachers of diverse learners, not just those who teach English learners.

Before the next learning session, read the narrative vignette in the companion document (pages 22-30), which illustrates another instructional sequence from Mr. Hermann's classroom. As you read, consider the following questions:

- How does Mr. Hermann support students in developing both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies?
- How do we see Mr. Hermann apply the theory of action in his classroom?
  - Students engage in a high volume of reading
  - o Students read and listen to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level
  - o Students think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing
  - Students develop the skill and craft of a writer
  - Students practice foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing
- How does Mr. Hermann differentiate his instruction so it meets the needs of the diverse learners in his classroom?

The *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee English Learner Companion* is hyperlinked <u>here</u>, and can also be found at this URL:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/readready/documents/teaching\_literacy\_tennessee\_english\_learner\_companion.pdf

The description of Mr. Hermann's classroom begins on page 22.

We will discuss Mr. Hermann's classroom further in Learning Session #2.